

Guest class WGSX 200  
Prof. Joanna Bartow

Cixous, Hélène. Vivre l'orange. To live the Orange. Paris: des femmes, 1979.

"I felt guilty that my writing was aside from reality" (12).

p. 28

She had the two courages : that of going to the sources, - to the foreign parts of the self. That of returning, to herself, almost without self, without denying the going. She slipped out of the self, she had that severity, that violent patience, she went out by décollage, by radiance, by laying bare the senses, it requires unclothing sight all the way down to naked sight, it requires removing from sight the looks that surround, shedding the looks that demand, like tears, dis-regarding to arrive at sight without a project, contemplation.

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I feel women writing in my writing, giving birth, giving milk, going to bed alone and sad getting up gay, my hands move forward now with footsteps of fire, now with white she-wolf footsteps, my hands clawing each other, the palms shedding milky tears.

Where does the question of iran touch us ? Far from the borders, from the tanks, from the laws, far from the chayatollas, from the frenchlife, from the american farce, in this inner clearing, in the Espairides, where women invent without maps of guiltiness new kinds of happiness.

Only the women who have gone as far as the Least, to the place that is poor enough, immensely spare enough, to enable the greatness of each thing to prepare to spring forth, know how the survival of the orange marvelously great, is the condition of the liberation of all of humanity kept silent, hidden, hated, beneath the peoples and their histories.

p. 36

My unhappy innocence, my innocence is my remorse. The innocence of Clarice around my window is at present my true light. For such an innocence, its panther's ankles, its footsteps of life, its sublime savagery, its spirituality, what would I not do, what have I not done, what have I nearly done ? Difficult it is to have the greatest strength : that of being no one, like a rose, of being pure joy before all naming.

She is comprehensive. And she writes for no one, she gives forth names, fruits, her hand, in the darkness. She says the things, and the things go towards anyone, towards me, towards women and come to us burning, the twelfth of October 1978, fall upon us, are given.

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p. 42  
This night the writing came to me, - Clarice, her angel's footsteps in my room. Her grey-green thunderbolt voice. Again the voice of truth, her light voice, the stroke of truth in the desert my room. My angel struggled with me; my angel of poverty called me, its voice Clarice, the inebriant call of poverty. I struggled, she read me, in the fire of her writing, I let her read me, she read herself into me at the ground-floor of my soul, there where I used to live, when I hadn't begun to walk, to raise my hands towards things,

I wandered ten glacial years in over-published solitude, without seeing a single human woman's face, the sun had retired, it was mortally cold, the truth had set, I took the last book before death, and behold, it was Clarice, the writing. I wasn't sleeping, but my eyes were frozen, my sight did not reach things. The writing came up to me, she addressed to me, in seven tongues, one after the other, she read herself to me, through my absence up to the presence. She came in, she alighted in front of me.

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I saw her face, My God. She showed me her face. I had my vision. It was a matter of the face. The face of the Vision. She showed herself unto me, in the night. A face in profile took me by the eyes, by the heart, it opened the night with a glance. Its matt slightly bronzed complexion. With the luminous intensity more intense than light. Eyes closed, I contemplated it. Its matt radiance held me by the eyelids, by the heart. Turned towards the occident, on the left hand of my seized body. The face bent over. What happened. I saw.

Revealed to me. It was the revelation. The skin of an opaque complexion, of a fixed bronzed orange, the skin imposing, restrained.